THE DODGE CITY TIMES.

SUBSCRIPTION: $2 00 per Year, In Advance.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Is the calm blue light of a summer sea
A boat went flitting by,
And a youth and a maiden earnestly
Watched its beautiful white wings fly.

They gazed as only the young can gaze,
With longing, and joy, and hope,
And the white sail, luffing a little, showed
The legend of "Samson's Soap."

In the sweet still light, another sail
Came fast and ever faster,
And the motto, bright, that it bore aloft
Was "Dodson's Porous Plaster."

And farther off, but hurrying on
(Fierce roars the surf and louder),
Came a sail with the sweet suggestion to
"Use Lightning Baking Powder."

"How sweet," said the maid, "it is to sit
At Nature's feet, and adore her,
Reading and learning the virtues of
'The Thunder Hair Restorer.'"

"Yes," said the youth, and he dropped a tear,
"Such joys one never forgets,
I love to be told, in this gracious way,
Of 'Tecumseh's cigarettes.'"

—*Scribner's Brie-a-Brac.*

THE FRENCH CROWN DIAMONDS.

A PRETTY piece of news comes to us from France. M. Turquet, the Minister who has charge of the Department of the Fine Arts, proposes to turn to account the jewels of the French crown for the increase of the public collections of paintings and sculptures.

His plan is to divide these jewels into three classes. The first class, which will include all the jewels having an historical interest, he wishes to deposit at the Museum of the Louvre, open to the inspection of the public. The second class will comprise the stones which have a value as mineralogical specimens, and these he desires to have deposited at the Museum of Mines. The third class, which is much the most numerous, consists of the jewels which have only a commercial value. These he proposes to sell at public auction, and invest the proceeds for the annual purchase of works of art. Every rational being in France approves this excellent scheme, and there is reason to believe that it will be adopted by the National Legislature.

The crown jewels of France were renowned for centuries, and it was thought to be a great concession to the people when, in 1784, the gallery in which they were kept was opened to visitors once a month. Before that time, it was a sort of distinction in France to have been allowed to inspect that wonderful collection, and even afterwards it was not an easy matter to be one of the crowd of monthly visitors.

From an inventory taken in 1791 (which employed twelve men three months), we learn that the collection comprised the following gems: 9,547 diamonds; 513 pearls; 230 rubies, of which 145 were not mounted; 68 topazes not mounted; 150 emeralds, of which 133 were not mounted; 134 sapphires not mounted; and a large number of other gems of various values and colors. The jewels were arranged in eleven cases of large size, in such a way as to exhibit their splendors to the greatest advantage.

Among the diamonds there were four which were celebrated throughout the world, each of which had a history. First, there was the Regent, brought from India early in the last century by Thomas Pitt, and sold in 1717 to the Regent of France, the Duke of Orleans, for $400,000. It weighs a little over 136 carats; and although not the largest, it is considered the finest diamond in existence. The Duke de St. Simon, who persuaded the Regent to buy it, describes it thus in his Memoirs:

"It is of the size of a Queen Claude plum, of a form almost round, of a thickness proportioned to its volume, perfectly white, free from every spot, shade and flaw, of an admirable water, and it weighs more than five hundred grains."

St. Simon adds:

"I applaud myself much for having induced the Regent to make so illustrious a purchase."

It is, indeed, a most beautful object. The reader may be amused with the arguments used by St. Simon to persuade the Regent to buy the diamond. When it was offered for sale, in 1717, the finances of the French Government were in great disorder. The Regent, though he coveted the possession of the jewel for the crown, was dismayed at the price, and refused to buy it; as the King of England had done for the same reason. No one could look at it without wishing to put it in his pocket and carry it home; but two millions of francs was a very large sum in those times, not less, I think, in purchasing power, than the same number of our gold dollars of to-day. The King of France then was Louis XV., a little boy seven years old, and not very robust. St. Simon, however, saw the child with the eyes of a Duke of the old *regime*, and he reasoned thus:

"I agreed with Law (who also advised the purchase) that it did not become the grandeur of the King of France to allow himself to be frustrated by the price of an object which was unique in the world, and inestimable; and that the greater the number of potentates who had not dared to think of it, the more we ought to beware of letting it escape us. The Regent feared to be blamed for making a purchase so considerable at a time when we could scarcely meet necessities the most pressing, and when we were obliged to leave so many people unpaid. I praised this sentiment; but I told him that he ought not to act for the greatest King in Europe as he would for a private individual. It was his duty to consider the honor of the crown, and not permit the chance to escape of procuring a diamond without price, which obliterated those of all Europe. I maintained that it would be a glory for his regency which would last forever."

He said, also, that the finances were in so bad a condition that two or three million francs more or less would make no difference. He prevailed at length, although the Regent was obliged to buy the gem on credit and give the merchant a pledge of two million francs' worth of smaller crown jewels until the price was paid. The prediction of the Duke de St. Simon, that the Regent would be remembered chiefly through the purchase of the jewel, appears to have come true. The fact that this splendid object is called the Regent does more to perpetuate his memory than any other act of his careless and bad administration. People in general would scarcely know that France had ever had a Regent but for the diamond, which to this day retains its rank as the finest jewel in the world.

Another of the great diamonds was called the Sancy. It resembled a pendulum in form, was very pure and brilliant, weighed thirty-three carats, and was valued at two hundred thousand dollars. Another was styled the Mirror of Portugal, oblong in shape, extremely white and clear, weighing twenty-one carats, and was valued at fifty thousand dollars. The fourth in value, called the Tithe of Mazarin, was square in form with rounded edges, splendidly brilliant, weighing sixteen carats, and worth ten thousand dollars. There were also some wonderful pearls and rubies. The most noted pearl weighed twenty-seven carats and was valued at forty thousand dollars; and there was a necklace of twenty-five pearls, valued at two hundred thousand dollars. A ruby of fifty-six carat and another of twenty-two were greatly admired; not to speak of a bewildering number of very fine gems of less importance.

Such were the crown jewels of France in 1791, the last year of the ancient monarchy. They were many thousands in number and were estimated to be worth two hundred millions of francs. In that year of excitement and terror the revolutionary party were already beginning to think of utilizing those glittering treasures, and were quite determined that the King and his Austrian wife should not carry them off. The royal jewels were much in people's minds in those terrible days, and there were rumors afloat of the arrest of fugitives with trunks full of gems, and of boats floating down the Seine loaded with the most magnificent diamonds.

It was, indeed, time to look after these treasures. During the day of riot and confusion following the tenth of August, 1782, when all authority was suspended, the whole crowd of pickpockets, burglars and tramps of Paris surrounded the Repository where they were kept, and stole nearly every jewel of any value. When order was restored, this wonderful collection had nearly disappeared; the few smaller stones left being worth about forty thousand dollars. Proclamation was made, and proceedings were instituted. In the course of that year, about a million francs' worth were recovered by the police; and, four years after, the superb Regent was found, as it is said, buried in the beam of the attic of an old house in Paris. At least it was recovered by a noted detective, who was afterward promoted to be Chief of Police. Such a diamond would have been of no value whatever to a thief, as it was a familiar object to every person in the world able to buy it.

During the reign of Napoleon, the Regent was inserted in the end of the hilt of his sword of State. Upon his return from Elba, Louis XVIII. carried off the crown jewels, but brought them back again after Waterloo. The value of the collection at the present moment, according to the estimate of M. Turquet, is about four millions of dollars; of which he proposes to sell six hundred thousand dollars' worth. This large sum well invested will yield about twenty thousand dollars a year for the purchase of works of art.

A curious circumstance is that most of the fifty-nine sapphires which decorated the crown worn by Louis XVIII. and Charles X. have been discovered to be false. One of the ancient crowns, which is to be preserved for its historic interest, is composed of five thousand five hundred gems, and there is a sword which is decorated with 1,569 gems.—*James Parton, in N. Y. Ledger.*

Mince-Pie and Destiny.

WITH the appearance of the oyster the mince-pie evolves itself out of the vasty deep, and its old familiar name again decorates the menus of our restaurants. Justice never has been done to this dish, and this is probably why it wreaks itself upon the human race. It is a triumph of eclecticism, a cosmopolitan dainty which has chosen its substances from the four quarters of the globe, and which is graved with a respectable richness, an oily, sleek fatness redolent of high living, dyspepsia and gout. Everybody makes fun of the mince-pie, even those who eat it most readily, and it is currently believed that all possible jokes about its make-up were exhausted before the war, but nearly everybody eats it. Some apparently happy in the possession of copper-bottomed stomachs thrive upon the pie; others are simply pale and sicklied slaves of a habit as hard to break off as the use of opium. When a man or boy gets the custom fastened upon him he is gone. No one knows the amount of mince-meat daily assimilated into the St. Louis system, but an idea of the quantity can be gained from the fact that it is invariably the first article exhausted on the bill of fare in every restaurant where it is sold. The waiter will inform you sadly that the mince-pie is all out in nine cases out of ten when you are late for dinner. Nobody ever heard of the apple-pie being exhausted, or the sago pudding. This fatal mania for mince-pie has a queer history, and is working out a singular destiny. In two or three centuries it will have utterly changed the American character and person; it will alter our civilization, weaken our morals and diminish the calves of our legs. It is even now our National dish, as poker is our National game and politics our National business. And it need surprise no one if our harmonic equivalent for the roast beef of Old England fifty years from now will be the mince-meat of Old America. We are gradually coming to this, and there is no use in dodging the issue.—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

A Perpetual Skating Pond.

THERE is a lake on the Saw Tooth Mountains that has probably no equal in the United States. It is about sixty or sixty-five miles from Bonanza, and at an altitude of nearly twelve thousand feet. The lake lies in a basin among the sharp crags of the snowy Saw Tooth, and is a sheet of perpetual ice. It was discovered in August of last year by a party of prospectors, and named the Ice Lake. The sun seemed to have no effect upon it except in places adjoining the shore. It is simply a great bowl in the hard mountain rock brimful of solid ice, upon which the rays of the sun descend with no power to penetrate.—*Yankee Fork (Cal.) Herald.*

A BOSTON happy thought is to turn the abundance of the apple crop to account for the poor people of that city. Bags are sent to farmers who will contribute, and the railroads give transportation free.

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

AN American, Miss Harkness, has won the long-sawed-for prize for excellence on the violin, at the Paris Conservatory.

PROBABLY the oldest copy of the Bible in this country is owned by William F. Clay, of Camden, N. J. It was published in London in 1558.

EUGENE SCHUYLER'S "Life of Peter the Great," will be simultaneously published in five different countries immediately after its completion in magazine form.

JULES VERNE, the novelist, has made $250,000 from his writings. He is fifty-one years old, enjoys good health, and works as hard as if he hadn't a cent laid up.

JOHN BRIGHT, the great English statesman, has so great an admiration for Milton's writings that he carries with him wherever he goes a copy of "Paradise Lost."

THE City of Caen is enjoying an exhibition of rare books printed in Normandy, arranged in celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the introduction of the art into the city.

JOSEPH PARRY, of the University College of Wales, has composed a Welsh opera called "Blodwen, or the White Flower," which is to be produced in Cleveland and Cincinnati this month.

MR. LARKIN J. MEAD, in Florence, is engaged upon a colossal figure which will symbolize the Mississippi River, and which, it is said, is being done on Mr. Elliott F. Shepard's order for Central Park.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, says the London *Vanity Fair*, "is a learned, kindly, strong, pleasant, honest man. He writes with great quickness and facility, and always with great correctness, that English language of which he is so proud and so fond; and he is personally altogether one of the most delightful of men."

HERBERT SPENCER, the distinguished philosophical writer, is described as being of medium statue, slimly built, long-legged and a great walker. He is a bachelor, living in a quiet boarding-house in the West End of London. He talks with the same force and perspicuity as he writes.

HUMOROUS.

PRAIRIE chickens are game to the last.

DOES a person become stone blind who is petrified with astonishment?

A WAG says of a toper: His nose has passed the rubicund.—*Chicago Tribune.*

PARADOXICAL: The person who wishes to stay in this world will avoid the deadly corset.—*Boston Courier.*

ALMOST time for husking bees.—*Ithaca Journal.* We'd just like to see you husk a bee once.—*N. Y. Graphic.*

"YOU can't play that on me!" said the piano to the amateur who broke down on a difficult piece of music.—*N. Y. News.*

THERE are hundreds of entertaining writers who would be good historians if they did not know so many things that have never happened.—*N. O. Picayune.*

A CALIFORNIA woman seven feet tall and weighing two hundred pounds broke her heart for love of a little runt of a man, wearing number four boots and leading a poodle by a chain.

"WHAT is meant by the power behind the throne?" asked the teacher. "The ace," replied the smart, bad boy, "which is greater than the king." P. S.—The s. b. b. stayed in after school.—*Hawkeye.*

EVEN a deacon won't say grace when he steps into a railway eating house. He knows that it would be asking too much to request that he be made thankful for anything he will get there.—*Boston Post.*

THAT Spanish baby over which such a great fuss was raised is pug-nosed and almond-eyed, and we can't help but feel glad on't. One baby ought to be as good as another the world over.—*Detroit Free Press.*

"INQUIRER" asks: "Is the Great Eastern the largest vessel ever built?" An impression has got abroad that she is, but such is not the case. The Mayflower, in which the Pilgrim fathers came to this country, was the largest ship that ever plowed the waters. The old furniture scattered over this country brought over by the Mayflower would fill the Great Eastern a dozen times or more.—*Norristown Herald.*